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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7942
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7655
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9224
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5306
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0503
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 5905
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4037
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 005683

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: URIBE PROPOSAL TO FARC ON HOSTAGES

REF: BOGOTA 4716

Classified By: Political Counselor John Creamer - Reasons 1.5 (b, d)

Uribe Hostage Proposal

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¶1. (U) On August 2, President Alvaro Uribe said he would release Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) prisoners and create an "encounter zone" for peace talks with the FARC for 90 days if the FARC first released all its hostages. The offer came in a public, sometime tense, debate on Bogota's Bolivar Plaza after the president met with Professor Gustavo Moncayo. Moncayo, whose son has been held by the FARC for ten years, had just completed a highly publicized 45 day, 1,000 kilometer trek from Narino to Bogota to highlight the plight of hostage families. Uribe reiterated that he would not cede "one square millimeter" of territory to the FARC for a "despeje" or demilitarized zone, and insisted any FARC prisoners released would have to leave the FARC and return to civil society. Moncayo plans to remain in the Plaza until there is progress on an accord.

Despite Pressure, No "Despeje" Zone

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¶2. (C) Secretary General of the Presidency Bernardo Moreno told us August 1, Uribe was concerned that while his personal approval ratings remain high, support for GOC positions on a humanitarian accord, the paramilitary process, and the handling of the guerrillas is starting to erode. Moncayo's march and stay in the Plaza Bolivar would hurt the GOC politically and increase pressure on it to agree to a despeje for talks on a humanitarian exchange. Moreno reiterated the GOC is open to an exchange, but will never accept a despeje zone. Moreno said the European proposal of December 13, 2005, which called for a 70 square mile zone in the tiny southwestern town of El Retiro to conduct talks on a humanitarian accord, remains valid. Uribe confirmed the GOC's continued acceptance of the European proposal during the Bolivar debate.

Awaiting FARC Response

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¶3. (C) Longtime GOC-FARC go-between Alvaro Leyva told us July 28, the FARC would have to return the bodies of eleven hostages killed by the FARC on June 18 (reftel) before any progress could be made on a humanitarian exchange or broader issues. He expects the FARC to return the cadavers over the next month, and attributed the delay to a FARC internal investigation into the circumstances of the deaths. Colombian military efforts to locate the bodies were another complication. Leyva claimed the FARC understands the United

States will not return extradited FARC members "Sonia" and "Simon Trinidad," but said the group wants to communicate with the United States. He added that FARC talks with Uribe would be "impossible" due to the personalization of the conflict on both sides.
Drucker